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Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Friday, 25 June 1993, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. KALPAGE (Sri Lanka)
(Vice-President)

- Restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields [47]

  (a) Report of the Secretary-General

  (b) Draft resolutions

  (c) Draft decision

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In the absence of the President, Mr. Kalpagé (Sri Lanka), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.55 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 47 (continued)

RESTRUCTURING AND REVITALIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS IN THE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND RELATED FIELDS

(a) REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/47/534)

(b) DRAFT RESOLUTIONS (A/47/L.58, A/47/L.60)

(c) DRAFT DECISION (A/47/L.59)

The PRESIDENT: This morning the General Assembly will resume its consideration of agenda item 47.

Members will recall that at the forty-seventh plenary meeting of the General Assembly, held on 27 October 1992, the President of the General Assembly informed the Assembly that he was establishing an open-ended working group on agenda item 47 and that he had requested Mr. Ramiro Piriz Ballon, Permanent Representative of Uruguay, to chair the working group on his behalf.

The President of the General Assembly has asked me to read out the following statement:

"It is with regret that I am unable to be present at this meeting of the General Assembly on agenda item 47, 'Restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields'.

"I should like to emphasize that one of the draft resolutions before the Assembly is the result of long, exhaustive and difficult informal consultations undertaken on my behalf by Ambassador Piriz Ballon of Uruguay, as Chairman of the ad hoc working group. I wish to thank him for his untiring efforts during the last nine months in guiding the activities of the group in such a constructive and effective way.

(The President)

"My thanks also go to all those delegations which have shown political will and understanding for their goal-oriented approach and numerous and valuable comments, suggestions and ideas.

"It is my strong belief that the action to be taken at this meeting will better serve the need for a strong United Nations role in international cooperation for development.

"The wide scope of the reforms will ensure improvements at both the policy-making and the operational levels. In this way, the present overlapping and unnecessary duplication of work between the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly will be avoided. These measures will enhance the functions and powers of the Economic and Social Council as the main policy-making and coordinating body in the area of economic and social development, within the framework of the United Nations Charter.

"At a time of major political and economic changes taking place throughout the world, it is my hope that the General Assembly will today take an important practical step forward on the road to restructuring and revitalizing the United Nations in order to fulfil its vast responsibilities in promoting international cooperation for development."

Before calling on the Permanent Representative of Uruguay, who will report on the outcome of the consultations held in the working group, I wish to express our deep appreciation for his vigorous efforts.

I call now on Mr. Ramiro Piriz Ballon, Permarent Representative of Uruguay and Chairman of the ad hoc working group on agenda item 47.

Mr. PIRIZ BALLON (Uruguay), Chairman of the ad hoc working group on agenda item 47 (interpretation from Spanish): I wish first of all to convey my profound thanks to the President of the General Assembly, Mr. Ganev, and to you, Sir, for the excessively kind words about my efforts to carry out the tasks assigned to me.

At the beginning of the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly, the President of the Assembly assigned me the honour - and the very difficult task - of presiding over the negotiations on one of the most complex and controversial items on our agenda. The work of the Assembly's ad hoc working group took place over more than nine months and continued the work carried out in prior years with a view to achieving the profound reforms that, by consensus, all Member States demanded.

During this period of more than nine months, there were several periods of activity. The first included a series of formal, informal and informal-informal meetings of the working group, during which there was progress in the negotiation of a large portion of the texts on the basis of the document submitted by the Group of 77 and the comments made by various delegations and groups of delegations. Then the hubbub of the General Assembly and the end-of-year holidays imposed a pause in our work; we resumed in March, with two weeks of very intensive negotiations in which all groups participated fully. That stage culminated in the final draft of document A/47/L.58, which is before the Assembly this morning.

Subsequently, the group held three formal meetings to gain final agreement on the text. While a broad majority favoured the document, some countries had reservations on two paragraphs. It was decided to allow more time for the parties concerned to negotiate a way out and inform the Chairman

(Mr. Piriz Ballon, Chairman, ad hoc working group on agenda item 47)

of the result; needless to say, the Chairman followed closely the efforts being made by all delegations to find a compromise.

Although, using formulas negotiated by the Chairman, it was possible to improve two paragraphs of the draft text, as I shall explain in due course, the deadline has passed without the achievement of a formula acceptable to all, that is a consensus formulation. For that reason, and noting that there was no time for further negotiations, I now submit to the Assembly the results of our negotiations.

I know that their substantive merits are well known, and I shall confine myself to highlighting three of the results of our work: first, the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council in its functions and in its authority for system-wide coordination; secondly, rationalization of work among the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and subsidiary bodies; and thirdly, rationalization and harmonization of the agendas of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. It is my understanding that, if adopted, these provisions would enter into force on 1 January 1994.

I wish now to revise the text of document A/47/L.58 to reflect the two improvements I mentioned, which take into account the concerns of many countries.

First, paragraph 34, part III (D) of annex I, has been deleted. In its place the following paragraph should be inserted as operative paragraph 6 of the draft resolution:

(Mr. Piriz Ballon, Chairman, ad hoc working group on agenda item 47)

(spoke in English)

"Decides that additional efforts shall be made to further improve the functioning of the United Nations in the field of operational activities. Appropriate arrangements should be made for a comprehensive review of the implementation of the present resolution, including the issue of the composition of the Executive Boards, and of the decisions on financing. These matters could be considered at a high-level meeting of the Council in 1996 and at the fifty-first session of the General Assembly."

(spoke in Spanish)

The present paragraph 5 of the draft resolution would be renumbered as paragraph 7.

(Mr. Piriz Ballon, Chairman, ad hoc working group on agenda item 47)

Secondly, operative paragraph 3 of resolution 47/199 is incorporated into paragraph 29 of annex 1, so that paragraph 29 reads,

(spoke in English)

"As part of the overall reform process and in order to strengthen the funding mechanism, there is a need for a substantial increase in resources for operational activities for development on a predictable, continuous and assured basis, commensurate with the increased needs of developing countries, as stated in resolution 47/199. Any new funding system should include mechanisms for all participating countries to demonstrate their responsibility and commitment to the programmes and funds. Such mechanisms should distinguish between the financing arrangements for contributions by developed countries and others in a position to do so, as against the capacity for voluntary contributions from developing countries."

(spoke in Spanish)

I thus present this text for the Assembly's consideration, with the understanding that the regional groups of countries, as appropriate and in accordance with their internal practices and procedures, will make all necessary efforts to guarantee the representation and rotation of their members in the elective bodies.

Also in this respect, I have been asked to stress that, as regards elections for the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Executive Board, following the adoption of this draft resolution - that is to say, if this draft resolution should be adopted - Japan will be included among the countries of the Group of Western European and Other States.

(Mr. Piriz Ballon, Chairman, ad hoc working group on agenda item 47)

Finally, I must announce that for lack of time documents A/47/L.59 and A/47/L.60 have not been dealt with. The Secretariat should review the Second Committee's biennial programme of work before it is considered in plenary. Document A/47/L.60 should be considered during the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly.

Mr. JARAMILLO (Colombia) (interpretation from Spanish): Appearing on today's agenda is the consideration of draft resolution -

The PRESIDENT: I call on the Permanent Representative of Uruguay on a point of order.

Mr. PIRIZ BALLON (Uruguay) (interpretation from Spanish): I kindly ask you, Mr. President, to read out the list of sponsors of this draft resolution.

The PRESIDENT: The sponsors of draft resolution A/47/L.58 are Argentina, Australia, Austria, Canada, Chile, Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America.

Mr. JARAMILLO (Colombia) (interpretation from Spanish): Appearing on today's agenda is the consideration by the General Assembly of the "Restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields".

The draft resolution under consideration presents problems for a significant number of countries, and I wish to say that I am speaking on behalf of an important group of countries that are members of the Group of 77.

As is obvious, this draft resolution is important for the future of the Organization and the future of the social and economic fields, and this group of countries on whose behalf I speak finds it highly inadvisable to put it, at

(Mr. Jaramillo, Colombia)

this time, to the vote, a confrontational vote without a prior agreement. This week's reigning spirit of collaboration and extensive cooperation between North and South - now termed the "spirit of Rio" - was much in evidence in the Commission on Sustainable Development. It is in that spirit that I take the liberty of invoking rule 74 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly to request that the Assembly not take action today and that a meeting be set for the month of September so that we will have time during the rest of the forty-seventh session to seek the necessary agreement between parties, in the spirit of collaboration between North and South.

I repeat: This very important group of countries considers it highly inadvisable to put the draft resolution to the vote and thus bring about a confrontation between North and South, or between one country and another, on the very important issue now before us. We wish to use the time available before the end of the forty-seventh session to try to find the necessary agreement in this area.

I formally request, then, that action not be taken today, that consideration of draft resolution A/47/L.58 be postponed and that the General Assembly meet on this matter at the end of the forty-seventh session, that is, in the month of September.

The CHAIRMAN: I call on the representative of Denmark on a point of order.

Mr. FRIIS (Denmark): The representative of Colombia has just made a proposal in which he asked the General Assembly not to take action today on the draft resolutions before us and to postpone its consideration of the documents. We should like to ask for a 15-minute suspension of the meeting in order to consider this proposal.

The PRESIDENT: I call on the representative of Mexico on a point of order.

Mr. TELLO (Mexico) (interpretation from Spanish): We listened most attentively, as always, to Ambassador Jaramillo, but it was not clear to us whether he wishes, on behalf of the countries that wish the decision before us to be postponed, that it be postponed until September, as my delegation heard him say.

We would like, through you, Sir, to ask the representative of Colombia whether he has a specific date in mind or whether he would agree to a date being set at this meeting for the corresponding decision to be taken.

Mr. JARAMILLO (Colombia) (interpretation from Spanish): I would respectfully ask that we oblige the request of the representative of Denmark and that wait until the resumption of the meeting to clarify these other points.

The PRESIDENT: Having heard the Permanent Representative of Colombia, if there is no objection I shall now suspend the meeting.

The meeting was suspended at 11.25 a.m. and resumed at 11.55 a.m.

The PRESIDENT: I call on the representative of Egypt, who wishes to make a statement.

Mr. AWAAD (Egypt) (interpretation from Arabic): Upon the instructions of my Government, I asked to speak in order to give a summary of how the Foreign Ministers of the Organization of African Unity, at a meeting in Cairo, held prior to the 29th African Summit, dealt with the question of restructuring of the United Nations. The meeting considered the report of the African Group at Headquarters in New York on restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields. I am honoured to review the most important points dealt with and the recommendations approved.

First, the meeting reaffirmed the reaction of Africa and its full conviction of the necessity of restructuring and carrying out reforms in order to improve the efficiency of the United Nations in both the economic and social fields. It also affirmed -

The PRESIDENT: I call on the representative of the United States on a point of order.

Mr. MARKS (United States of America): I thought, Mr. President, that we were dealing with a motion for non-action, which, according to the rules, requires that a certain process be gone through. I do not understand why another representative has taken the floor to make a substantive comment, or a purported substantive comment.

The PRESIDENT: Before ruling on that point of order, I call on the representative of Egypt on a point of order.

Mr. AWAAD (Egypt) (interpretation from Arabic): With all due respect to what the representative of the United States said, I should like to report on what we have talked about during the suspension of the meeting. Sir, I asked to speak before the Group of 77 motion was moved. I asked to speak now, when the meeting resumed, to discuss what I had wanted to discuss earlier, and my delegation would like the opportunity -

The PRESIDENT: I call on the Permanent Representative of Finland on a point of order.

Mr. BREITENSTEIN (Finland): I apologize for interrupting the statement of the representative of Egypt, but I would like to know exactly where we find ourselves. I thought that we would proceed according to rule 74 of the rules of procedure, the rule under which the Permanent Representative of Colombia made his proposal. According to that rule, two representatives may speak in favour of, and two against, the motion.

I should like to know whether the representative of Egypt is now speaking in favour of the motion. At the same time, I should like to put forward my name as a speaker against the motion.

I only wanted to know the context in which this discussion is going on.

The PRESIDENT: In view of the points of order that have been raised, may we now go back to where we were? May I advise the representative of Egypt to submit what he has to say - the statement he was going to make - as a document of the General Assembly.

Let us now return to what we were doing. The representative of Colombia has moved, within the terms of rule 74 of the rules of procedure, that no action be taken at this meeting on the draft resolution in document A/47/L.58, as orally revised by the Permanent Representative of Uruguay.

I call on the representative of Morocco on a point of order.

Mr. AMAZIANE (Morocco) (interpretation from French): It is my understanding that the representative of Egypt asked to speak well before the representative of Colombia moved his motion. I do not know what rule of procedure gives priority to one statement over another. May we be advised what the rules of procedure say on this matter, bearing in mind that the representative of Egypt asked to speak well before the motion was moved? We would be very interested to hear what the rules of procedure have to say, to the extent that what they have to say is closely related to the subject under discussion in the General Assembly.

The PRESIDENT: As far as I recall, the request of the representative of Egypt was brought to my attention after the representative of Colombia moved his motion. That is why I made the ruling that I did.

May we now proceed with what we were doing, which was to deal with the motion that no action be taken at this meeting on the draft resolution in document A/47/L.58, as orally revised by the Permanent Representative of Uruguay.

Representatives are aware of rule 74, which reads as follows:

"During the discussion of any matter, a representative may move the adjournment of the debate on the item under discussion. In addition to the proposer of the motion, two representatives may speak in favour of, and two against, the motion, after which the motion shall be immediately put to the vote."

Does any member wish to speak?

Mr. BREITENSTEIN (Finland): I should like, in accordance with rule 74 of the rules of procedure, to speak against the proposal of the Ambassador of Colombia, which he said he moved on behalf of a large number of countries.

(Mr. Breitenstein, Finland)

I have not had the opportunity this morning to undertake the consultations necessary to say that I speak on behalf of this or that group of countries, but I believe I can say that I speak on behalf of those countries that are in favour of the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields - in short, on behalf of all those that are deeply concerned and preoccupied in regard to the future of United Nations operational activities.

Thanks to the untiring, patient and devoted efforts of Ambassador Piriz Ballon and his collaborators, we reached agreement on a text in March. Subsequently the issue was reopened and further negotiations took place. In the light of that, my delegation does not believe that anything can be achieved by again postponing a decision. On the contrary, such an action would be met by many questions and a lot of suspicion in the outside world, in our capitals. What we are really doing now is voting on the reform itself, not on a procedural motion. That is why my delegation will cast a negative vote, because we are in favour of reform and strengthening United Nations operational activities.

Mr. MONGBE (Benin) (interpretation from French): Sitting at the back of the room, where I cannot be seen, I feel that I am hidden enough for my concealed position to reflect African wisdom. This African wisdom leads me to support the wise proposal made by Ambassador Jaramillo on behalf of a broad group of countries within this Assembly.

As Ambassador Jaramillo explained, this is not a time for confrontation. We spent a good week in another framework in which there was a fruitful dialogue between the North and the South. African wisdom prompts me to ask that we consider his motion.

(Mr. Mongbe, Benin)

If the rules of procedure allow, I have been authorized by the African Group to allow the representative of Egypt to speak now in my place, because he has new information to impart on behalf of the Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Permanent Representative of Benin, whom I have heard and seen.

Mr. SINON (Malaysia): The Malaysian delegation supports the motion moved by the representative of Colombia, on behalf of a large group of countries members of the Group of 77. The draft resolution as it is presented today, inclusive of the amendments proposed by the Chairman of the ad hoc working group, still poses some difficulties for my delegation.

Mr. MARKS (United States of America): Like the representative of Finland, I am speaking for a large number of countries and delegations from all parts of the world which have been seriously interested in the reform of the United Nations development system because we think it is necessary - nay, vital - to make that reform.

We have before us draft resolution A/47/L.58. It is admittedly an imperfect document, but it nas been said - and repeated ad infinitum - that it includes important, significant reforms. These reforms are necessary for a very simple reason: the United Nations development system is in trouble. Over the last few years declining resources have been made available to it. I may note that this decline in resources is despite my Government's action last year to increase its contribution. There is a loss of resources because of a loss of credibility in the effectiveness of the system as a whole, and in particular of its governance.

The reform represented in draft resolution A/47/L.58 was launched by the Nordic countries - and all honour to them, as major donors - and they were supported by other donors in many other countries, North and South, in order to save the United Natons development system. Draft resolution A/47/L.58 was not only the result of six or seven months' work, but went back to last year's session of the Economic and Social Council. It was submitted three months ago. Delegations have expressed concern in a series of meetings about what it

(Mr. Marks, United States)

contains, and are now asking for more time on the grounds that it is not ready for agreement.

I note with great sadness, and some chagrin, that in the past three months my delegation and others have asked for - have pleaded for - negotiations, consultations, counter-proposals. None have been forthcoming. In the last three months we have tried to deal further with draft resolution A/47/L.58 and its apparent imperfections, and no one has come forward to say "Let us talk about it; here is a counter-proposal; here is a Group of 77 proposal; here is a proposal on behalf of myself and two other delegations; can we work this out?" Nothing has happened in the three months since draft resolution A/47/L.58 was first submitted. If the past three months have produced nothing, what de we expect to do in July, when many of us will be at the Economic and Social Council session in Geneva, or in August? I need make no comments about what will happen in August.

In the view of my Government and my delegation, the decision to postpone is not a technical decision; it is a substantive decision basically stating that reform is not for now and reform will not take place in the United Nations system. My delegation sees no virtue in postponing, which will result in a de facto defeat of the reform effort, so important to the future of the United Nations development system.

With that thought in mind, I hope delegations will seriously decide how to deal with what we view as not a procedural, but a substantive, motion.

Wisdom is important, wherever it comes from, and I should like to quote the old saying: "If not us then who? If not now, then when?"

The PRESIDENT: We have now heard two speakers in favour of, and two speakers against, the motion submitted by the representative of Colombia that no action be taken on draft resolution A/47/L.58.

Before we proceed, I call on the representative of Egypt on a point of order.

Mr. AWAAD (Egypt) (interpretation from Arabic): You, Mr. President, gave the representatives who spoke against the no-action motion the opportunity to present their positions in detail. When you called on the representative of Benin he clearly stated, in a non-controversial way, that he would speak briefly and then cede the floor to the Egyptian delegation to express Africa's position in accordance with information received directly from Cairo. On that understanding, he spoke briefly and then ceded the floor to Egypt.

The PRESIDENT: From what I hear the representative of Egypt saying, I do not think he has a point of order. Therefore, I should like to proceed, because I am governed by rule 74, which states:

> "During the discussion of any matter, a representative may move the adjournment of the debate on the item under discussion. In addition to the proposer of the motion, two representatives may speak in favour of, and two against, the motion, after which the motion shall be immediately put to the vote."

I am guided by that, and that alone: two for, two against. My ruling is therefore that we have exhausted the number of speakers speaking on the motion of the Permanent Representative of Colombia. That is my ruling.

I call on the representative of Morocco on a point of order.

Mr. AMAZIANE (Morocco) (interpretation from French): We have nothing against your way of proceeding, in keeping with the rules of procedure, Mr. President. It is perfect. But I do not know if it was clear from the interpretation that the representative of Benin had yielded the floor to the representative of Egypt. Therefore, there have been two speakers against the motion and only one for, so there should be one more speaker in favour of the motion. Benin gave up its right to speak to Egypt.

The PRESIDENT: If the Permanent Representative of Benin did not wish to speak, then if he had only sent me a note before he spoke I would have known that he did not want to speak; but, having spoken, he has been one of those who spoke in favour of the Permanent Representative of Colombia's motion.

I call on the representative of Mexico on a point of order.

Mr. TELLO (Mexico) (interpretation from Spanish): Before you decided to suspend the meeting, Sir, my delegation made - or tried to make - a compromise proposal. I should like to address the representatives of Finland, the United States, Benin, Malaysia and, of course, Colombia -

The PRESIDENT: What is the point of order? If the representative of Mexico will address it to me I will give a ruling.

Mr. TELLO (Mexico): I am going to do that, Sir. I am just trying to explain myself.

(spoke in Spanish)

I propose, through you, Mr. President, that we agree by consensus to postpone the decision, as requested by Colombia, Malaysia and Benin, and at the same time agree by consensus to set Friday, 10 September, as the date for the General Assembly to take a decision on this draft resolution.

The PRESIDENT: I now put to the vote the motion presented by the representative of Colombia that no action be taken at this meeting on draft resolution A/47/L.58, as orally revised.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burundi, Cameroon, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Fiji, Gabon, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jamaica, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Morocco, Myanmar, Nepal, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Viet Nam, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, San Marino, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay

Abstaining: Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mauritania, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Solomon Islands, Tajikistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Venezuela

The motion, was adopted by 70 votes to 37, with 14 abstentions.

The PRESIDENT: Since the motion has been adopted, no action will be taken at this meeting on draft resolution A/47/L.58, as orally revised.

Consideration of draft resolution A/47/L.58, as orally revised by the Permanent Representative of Uruguay, is therefore postponed to a later date during the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly.

Mr. PIRIZ BALLON (Uruguay) (interpretation from Spanish): For my delegation, the result of the vote is eloquent. The delegation of Uruguay withdraws its co-sponsorship of draft resolution A/47/L.58. Since we have submitted to you, Mr. President, the results of the ad hoc group's meetings and negotiations, I consider that the task conferred upon me has been carried out.

I should like to express my delegation's fervent hope that on the basis of the decision just adopted it may be possible to find a compromise formula between now and the end of the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly. Uruguay will always be prepared, in this context, to support any constructive compromise solution.

Mr. HAAKONSEN (Denmark): On behalf of Denmark, I should like to inform you, Mr. President, that Denmark withdraws its co-sponsorship of draft resolution A/47/L.58.

I should like to make a statement also on behalf of the European Community and its member States.

The European Community and its member States strongly supported -

The PRESIDENT: I am sorry to interrupt the representative of Denmark. The Permanent Representative of the Comoros wishes to speak on a point of order, and I now call on him.

Mr. MOUMIN (Comoros): I should just like to know what we are doing now. Are we hearing statements in explanation of vote after the voting? You did not say that, Mr. President.

I just want to make it clear that we have now finished our debate on this issue and we are now hearing statements in explanation of vote after the voting. Would you please make that clear, Mr. President? If you do not, we shall not know what we are doing.

The PRESIDENT: I am again advised that no statements can be made in explanation of vote on motions. These requests to be allowed to speak, however, came as points of order. I believe that points of order can be raised at any time. That is why I called on the representatives who had made those requests.

Of course, since I must be guided by the wishes of the Assembly, I ask whether it is indeed the view of the Assembly that this matter has been concluded and there is no need for any further explanation. Is that the wish of the Assembly? If, as I am advised, there can be no statements in explanation of vote, do we now adjourn the meeting?

I again call on the representative of Egypt on a point of order.

Mr. AWAAD (Egypt) (intepretation from Arabic): I should like to place my reservation on record. I should indeed like to explain my vote on the motion.

The PRESIDENT: I am advised that there can be no statements in explanation of vote on motions. Can we therefore adjourn the meeting at this time?

I call on the representative of the United Kingdom on a point of order.

Mr. BARNETT (United Kingdom): On a point of order, I wish to announce that the United Kingdom wishes to withdraw its co-sponsorship of draft resolution A/47/L.58.

The PRESIDENT: Are there any other points of order? Since we have entertained points of order, let us hear them all.

I call on the representative of Argentina.

Mr. SERSALE di CERISANO (Argentina) (interpretation from Spanish): Under rule 88 of the rules of procedure, members may explain their votes after the voting. Argentina has great respect for majority votes, and understands that the proposal for no action has been approved; we therefore hope that this negotiating process will continue. We withdraw our sponsorship of this draft resolution so that the new negotiators will feel free and not feel their hands tied to positions taken by the previous negotiators.

The PRESIDENT: Also on a point of order, I call on the representative of Austria.

Ms. FREUDENSCHUSS-REICHL (Austria): I also should like to withdraw my country's name from the list of sponsors with the view of facilitating further negotiations which, I hope, will be forthcoming.

The PRESIDENT: I call on the representative of Colombia, who wishes to speak on a point of order.

Mr. JARAMILLO (Colombia) (interpretation from Spanish): I am very sorry, but the debate is closed; a vote took place, there can be no further explanations of vote and all the explanations that are taking place now are out of order.

The PRESIDENT: On the advice I have, I agree with the representative of Colombia that there can be no explanations of vote, but representatives are requesting to speak on points of order to withdraw their sponsorship of the draft resolution. Does the Assembly not wish to hear those representatives?

(The President)

I call on the representative of Colombia.

Mr. JARAMILLO (Colombia) (interpretation from Spanish): Once again, points of order are procedural, and what we are hearing are substantive statements, which are out of order.

The PRESIDENT: I call now on the representative of Australia.

Ms. TOMKINSON (Australia): I speak on a point of order to withdraw my delegation's sponsorship of the text.

The PRESIDENT: I call now on the representative of Brazil.

Mr. BAHADIAN (Brazil): I am asking for the floor, whether on a point of order or not I do not know; I am just seeking clarification of the situation we are in. As far as I understand it, after the vote we adjourned the debate under rule 74 of the rules of procedure. Thus, the debate on the resolution, including the question of sponsorship, has been concluded.

I seek clarification from you, Mr. President: what is the situation we are in now? As I understand it, the debate has been adjourned.

The PRESIDENT: I call now on the representative of Chile, who wishes to speak on a point of order.

Mr. GONZALEZ (Chile) (interpretation from Spanish): On a procedural basis, I withdraw Chile's sponsorship of the draft resolution.

As far as substantive issues are concerned, I reserve comment.

The PRESIDENT: I call now on the representative of the United States.

Mr. MARKS (United States of America): On a point of order, or whatever, the United States withdraws its sponsorship of draft resolution A/47/L.58.

The PRESIDENT: I call now on the representative of Uruguay, who wishes to speak on a point of order.

Mr. PIRIZ BALLON (Uruguay) (interpretation from Spanish): As we interpret it, my country's statement was an announcement, not a discussion following the vote. It was an announcement that countries have the right to make, i.e., either to add sponsorship or to withdraw it.

The PRESIDENT: I call on the representative of Denmark.

Mr. HAAKONSEN (Denmark): A point of clarification, Mr. President: according to which rule of procedure do you find that we cannot give an explanation of vote? As I see it, according to rule 88, there is a possibility of doing so; the rule states that:

"The President may permit members to explain their votes, either before or after the voting, except when the vote is taken by secret ballot".

Of course, if you, Mr. President, have a reference to another rule of procedure, we are prepared to be better informed.

The PRESIDENT: I call now on the representative of Cuba.

Mr. HIDALGO BASULTO (Cuba) (interpretation from Spanish): I have asked to speak, Sir, on a point of order because I think you have been very strict in applying the rules; we wish to support that strict application of the rules. This meant that you did not give the floor to the representative of Egypt even though he said that he had a very important statement to make on behalf of various members of the African Group. I think that the rules you applied then should be applied now, and that this entire exercise is out of order, as was clearly explained by the representatives of the Comoros and of Colombia.

The PRESIDENT: I call now on the representative of Finland.

Mr. KAARIA (Finland): On a point of order, let me anounce that Norway, Sweden and Finland are withdrawing their sponsorship of the draft resolution.

The PRESIDENT: I call now on the representative of Canada.

Mr. BAILLARGEON (Canada) (interpretation from French): Also on a point of order, Canada also wishes to withdraw its sponsorship of the draft resolution, for the same reasons as those who spoke before me.

The PRESIDENT: There are no other points of order. Therefore, the meeting is adjourned.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.

UNITED
NATIONS

A

General Assembly

PROVISIONAL

A/47/PV.108
30 July 1993

ENGLISH

Forty-seventh session

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 108th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 28 July 1993, at 10 a.m.

President: Mrs. ESCALER (Philippines)
(Vice-President)

- Earthquake in Japan and floods in Bangladesh, India, Nepal and the United States of America
- Admission of new members to the United Nations [19] (continued)

  (a) Application for admission

  (b) Letter from the President of the Security Council

  (c) Draft resolution

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the Official Records of the General Assembly.

Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, within one week, to the Chief, Official Records Editing Seciton, Office of Conference Services, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

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In the absence of the President, Mrs. Escaler (Philippines), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.40 a.m.

EARTHQUAKE IN JAPAN AND FLOODS IN BANGLADESH, INDIA, NEPAL AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

The PRESIDENT: Before turning to the item on our agenda for this morning, may I, on behalf of all the members of the Assembly, extend to the Government and the people of Japan, recently struck by an earthquake, and to the Governments and peoples of Bangladesh, India, Nepal and the United States of America, recently struck by floods, our deepest sympathy over these major disasters, which have caused tragic loss of lives and extensive material damage.

May I also express the hope that the international community will show its solidarity and respond promptly and generously to any request for help.

I now call on the representative of Japan.

Mr. HATANO (Japan): Madam President, I wish to thank you for your kind words addressed to the Government and people of Japan. The earthquake in the northern part of my country took a very heavy toll in lives and material damage, but, as the people in the area recover from their loss and work to rebuild their lives, I am sure they will derive strength and encouragement from knowing that they have the sympathy of peoples around the world.

The PRESIDENT: I now call on the representative of Bangladesh.

Mr. MAJID (Bangladesh): Madam President, I should like to thank you for your kind words of sympathy for my Government and for the people affected by the monsoon floods that have inundated large areas of Bangladesh. I shall of course convey your sentiments to my Government. This gesture of sympathy will certainly be appreciated.

(Mr. Majid, Bangladesh)

Floods are a recurrent problem in Bangladesh, a problem that we are trying to tackle in a comprehensive manner with help and support from our development partners. The present floods have affected an estimated 10 million people in the north and south-eastern regions of Bangladesh. Standing crops and thousands of hectares of land have been damaged.

The Bangladesh Government has mobilized all available resources to provide relief to the affected people. The Prime Minister has personally been visiting the affected areas. Public leaders and Government agencies are supervising relief operations. The people of Bangladesh are facing this disaster with courage and fortitude. We are grateful to friendly countries and organizations which have offered us support and assistance.

The PRESIDENT: I now call on the representative of India.

Mr. ANSARI (India): Madam President, my delegation is grateful to you for the sympathy you have expressed to the Government and people of India over the grievous loss of lives and property on account of the current floods in the northern parts of the country. May I also join you in expressing our sympathy to Japan, the United States, Nepal and Bangladesh, which have similarly suffered losses from the fury of nature.

The flood disasters in different parts of the globe have once again demonstrated the vulnerability of mankind to the ravages of nature. Natural disasters are a way of life, and the only way to deal with them is to alleviate the sufferings of the people, contain the damage and take measures to prevent their recurrence. International sympathy and support go a long way in helping the Governments concerned to cope with the situation.

The dimensions of the flood disaster in India are indeed enormous. It has affected over 35,000 villages, covering an area of a little over

(Mr. Majid, Bangladesh)

Floods are a recurrent problem in Bangladesh, a problem that we are trying to tackle in a comprehensive manner with help and support from our development partners. The present floods have affected an estimated 10 million people in the north and south-eastern regions of Bangladesh. Standing crops and thousands of hectares of land have been damaged.

The Bangladesh Government has mobilized all available resources to provide relief to the affected people. The Prime Minister has personally been visiting the affected areas. Public leaders and Government agencies are supervising relief operations. The people of Bangladesh are facing this disaster with courage and fortitude. We are grateful to friendly countries and organizations which have offered us support and assistance.

The PRESIDENT: I now call on the representative of India.

Mr. ANSARI (India): Madam President, my delegation is grateful to you for the sympathy you have expressed to the Government and people of India over the grievous loss of lives and property on account of the current floods in the northern parts of the country. May I also join you in expressing our sympathy to Japan, the United States, Nepal and Bangladesh, which have similarly suffered losses from the fury of nature.

The flood disasters in different parts of the globe have once again demonstrated the vulnerability of mankind to the ravages of nature. Natural disasters are a way of life, and the only way to deal with them is to alleviate the sufferings of the people, contain the damage and take measures to prevent their recurrence. International sympathy and support go a long way in helping the Governments concerned to cope with the situation.

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(Mr. Acharya, Nepal)

Information is still incomplete due to the disruption of transport and communications, and the final death toll is feared to be over 3,000. There has been an extensive loss of private property, standing crops and livestock. The highways linking the capital city, Kathmandu, with the rest of the country have been blocked by landslides and several major bridges have been washed away. Floods and landslides have damaged hydroelectric power stations and several irrigation systems, and some dams under construction have also been washed away.

Agencies of His Majesty's Government and other relief organizations have been providing food, medical and other assistance to the affected population. But national efforts are unable to cope with the magnitude of the devastation. Shortage of supplies and the disruption of transport and communications are affecting the relief operation.

So, while thanking donor countries and multilateral agencies, in particular the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, for the initial relief assistance, I take this opportunity to appeal to the Member Governments, the United Nations and its agencies and non-governmental organizations for assistance at this time of great tragedy and critical need in Nepal.

The PRESIDENT: I now call on the representative of the United States of America.

Mrs. ALBRIGHT (United States of America): My delegation greatly appreciates your kind words of sympathy, Madam President. This is a time when human need and suffering transcend politics. Natural disasters affect large and small, rich and poor alike.

The people of the American Midwest share the disappointment and the irrevocable change in their lives with those who are suffering in Bangladesh, India, Japan and Nepal. President Clinton has often said that domestic and foreign policy are two sides of the same coin. There is no clearer demonstration of this than when nations from different parts of the world act together to try to alleviate human suffering.

If any good is to come from natural disaster, it is the resolve with which communities band together and empathize with their fellow human beings. Right now, Americans along the Missouri river are building levees with sandbags sent from Bangladesh. It is clear that the world community is demonstrating its resolve and empathy. We are very grateful.

AGENDA ITEM 19 (continued)

ADMISSION OF NEW MEMBERS TO THE UNITED NATIONS

(a) APPLICATION FOR ADMISSION (A/47/973)

(b) LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL (A/47/976)

(C) DRAFT RESOLUTION (A/47/L.63)

The PRESIDENT: I now invite the General Assembly to consider the positive recommendation by the Security Council on the application for admission to membership in the United Nations of the Principality of Andorra.

The Security Council has recommended the admission of the Principality of Andorra in document A/47/976.

(The President)

The draft resolution concerning the admission of this new Member is contained in document A/47/L.63.

In addition to the countries listed in document A/47/L.63, the following countries have become sponsors of the draft resolution: Albania, Australia, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Djibouti, El Salvador, Guatemala, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Morocco, Nicaragua, Panama, Philippines, Poland, Portugal and Slovenia.

May I take it that the General Assembly accepts the recommendation of the Security Council and adopts draft resolution A/47/L.63 by acclamation?

Draft resolution A/47/L.63 was adopted (resolution 47/232).

The PRESIDENT: I therefore declare the Principality of Andorra admitted to membership in the United Nations.

I request the Chief of Protocol to escort the delegation of the Principality of Andorra to its place in the General Assembly Hall.

The delegation of the Principality of Andorra was escorted to its place in the General Assembly Hall.

The PRESIDENT: On this historic occasion it is my pleasure to welcome, on behalf of the General Assembly, the Principality of Andorra as a full Member of the United Nations. I congratulate the Principality of Andorra, and I congratulate the United Nations on the admission of its 184th Member State.

I wish the Government and the people of Andorra peace, prosperity, happiness and every success for the future. I wish to assure Andorra of the full support of the United Nations as it takes its rightful place in the

(The President)

international community as a free, independent, sovereign and peace-loving State.

I now call on the representative of Uganda, who will speak on behalf of the Group of African States.

Mr. BABA (Uganda): Let me begin by extending, on behalf of the African Group, our deepest sympathies to the Governments and peoples of Japan, Bangladesh, Nepal, India and the United States over the recent destruction caused by the fury of nature, bringing about unprecedented damage and loss of life in those countries. We call upon the international community at this trying time to come to their aid, especially to the aid of those least able to cope with the disasters.

Turning now to the happy occasion of the admission of the Principality of Andorra to the United Nations, let me, on behalf of the African Group, and on my own behalf, congratulate and most warmly welcome the Principality of Andorra to the family of the United Nations, in which it has sought membership.

We in Africa have no doubt that the Principality of Andorra is fully committed to upholding the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and to fulfilling all the obligations contained therein, as it has pledged itself many times to do.

The Principality of Andorra has, over a long period in its history, shown by example its commitment to peaceful coexistence with different neighbours. It is the fervent wish of our Group to see this coexistence and cooperation extended to all Members of the United Nations. As the Principality of Andorra joins us today as a Member, we wish it prosperity, well-being and stability in the years ahead.

For our part, at this historic moment we should like to express our hope that our representatives in the United Nations system will cooperate fully to

(Mr. Baba, Uganda)

meet the challenges that we face together and will strive to make this world a better place for all of us, and our commitment to those goals.

The PRESIDENT: I now call on the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Asian States.

Mr. PAK (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): On behalf of the States members of the Asian Group, I have the honour to convey our warm congratulations to the Government and people of the Principality of Andorra on its admission to membership in the United Nations.

With the admission of the Principality of Andorra, the membership of the United Nations has increased to 184 countries, which constitutes another occasion for further strengthening the role and activities of this Organization.

(Mr. Pak, Democratic People's Republic of Korea)

To attain membership in the United Nations at a time when the hopes and expectations that the world's peoples place in the Organization are constantly increasing is of great significance, particularly when the need to further the role of the Organization is becoming ever more pronounced.

In the past few years, a comparatively large number of countries have entered the Organization. This is an eloquent testimony to the fact that post-cold-war international relations are being forged on the basis of diversity. It is, indeed, a reflection of countries' desire to make due contributions to safeguarding world peace and security and to developing cooperative political, economic and cultural relations between States through their positive participation in the activities of the Organisation, guided by the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations.

We are convinced that the Principality of Andorra, with its desire for peace and security, justice and cooperation, will make a good contribution to fulfilling the valuable purposes of the Charter. On behalf of the States members of the Asian Group, I should like once again to express our welcome to the Principality of Andorra and assure it of our fullest cooperation towards the attainment of our shared objectives.

The PRESIDENT: I now call on the representative of Poland, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States.

Mr. WLOSOWICZ (Poland) At the outset, let me join all those who have expressed their sympathy with the peoples and Governments of Bangladesh, India, Japan, Nepal and the United States of America.

When the complex of United Nations buildings in New York was designed, it was expected that it would have to accommodate a maximum of 100 delegations.

(Mr. Wlosowicz, Poland)

At that time it was regarded as being far too big. Now we have reached the figure of 184 delegations.

It gives me great pleasure - and I speak on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States - to welcome the Principality of Andorra to the United Nations family.

Today, as the international community is undergoing most dramatic changes, the role of our Organization is rapidly expanding. Much is expected from us; much remains to be accomplished. We strongly believe that the joint efforts of all States Members of the United Nations will bring us closer to a better world.

Let me express my sincere congratulations to the Government and the people of the Principality of Andorra, and wish them many great successes on the international plane in their new capacity.

The PRESIDENT: I now call on the representative of Chile, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States.

Mr. ZUÑIGA (Chile) (interpretation from Spanish): As Chairman of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean countries, I have the high honour of offering the Principality of Andorra an enthusiastic and warm welcome to the United Nations. Our regional group welcomes the addition of this new Member State which, by joining in the remarkable growth in the Organization during the last few years, will strengthen the Organization's universality and its vitality in carrying out its international tasks.

This small European State, which is of such great age and tradition as a figure in the world's political maps, has a history of making it its constant practice to seek accord and consensus in its institutional life. This practice, which today most certainly finds in the United Nations a suitable

(Mr. Zuñiga, Chile)

sphere for application, is one of the principal formulas for peaceful coexistence between nations and one on whose basis it is certainly possible to ease the task of achieving peace and economic and social development, which is at once the shared aspiration and the common good of mankind.

In welcoming the Principality of Andorra at this solemn meeting of the General Assembly, we are sure that we are gaining a new vote for peace and economic and social progress. We are welcoming a State that will contribute to strengthening even further the democratic identity of this world Organization, and our determination to work as one for the noble ideals and objectives that almost 50 years ago were so masterfully set forth by the authors of the Charter of the United Nations, who then renewed, as we renew today, the world's hopes for a constantly better future.

This is the spirit in which the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean welcome the new Member State with satisfaction and feelings of fraternity. They congratulate it; they express their wishes for the well-being of its people and Government; and they assure it of their complete readiness to work closely with it in achieving the noble goals of the Organization.

The PRESIDENT: I now call on the representative of Luxembourg, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Western European and Other States.

Mr. WOLZFELD (Luxembourg) (interpretation from French): It is my great pleasure, on behalf of the Group of Western European and Other States, to offer to the Government and the people of the Principality of Andorra our warm congratulations on the occasion of Andorra's admission as the 184th Member of the United Nations.

(Mr. Wolzfeld, Luxembourg)

The admission of a new Member States is always a memorable event that marks a further step along our Organization's way towards the full implementation of the principle of universality. Today, it bears witness also to the international community's recognition of the sovereignty of the Principality of Andorra. We are convinced that the new Member State, which will from now on occupy its rightful place in our Assembly - and which, by so doing, will show that it is ready to honour its obligations under the Charter and to support the purposes and principles set out therein - will join in defending the noble ideals of our Organization and will make a positive contribution to our work.

For the Principality of Andorra, which has fiercely guarded its independence and its language since the twelfth century up in its valleys and mountains while adapting its institutions to meet the demands made of a modern State, accession to the United Nations is proof of its desire to work together with other nations in strengthening international cooperation.

All States Members of the United Nations, be they large or small, already old or newly born, share the common responsibility to contribute to strengthening the role of the Organization as a universal instrument capable of effectively safeguarding international peace and security, promoting economic and social development and ensuring respect for human rights.

In this spirit, we are happy to welcome the Principality of Andorra to our midst; we offer Andorra our full cooperation and our best wishes.

The PRESIDENT: I call on the representative of the United States of America, the host country.

Mr. HICKS (United States of America): As the host country of the United Nations, the United States joins with the other members of the General Assembly in welcoming Andorra as the newest Member of the United Nations. Andorra's membership brings us one step closer to universal membership, a goal we have sought since the inception of the United Nations.

The Andorran people have recently decided on independence, a choice we applaud and respect. We look forward to working together on the basis of the democratic values our two countries share. We welcome the Principality of Andorra.

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Head of Government of the Principality of Andorra, His Excellency Mr. Oscar Ribas Reig.

Mr. Oscar Ribas Reig, Head of Government of the Principality of Andorra, was escorted to the rostrum.

The PRESIDENT: I have great pleasure in welcoming the Head of Government of the Principality of Andorra, His Excellency Mr. Oscar Ribas Reig; I invite him to address the Assembly.

Mr. RIBAS REIG (Andorra) (interpretation from Spanish): I wish first of all, on behalf of the people of Andorra, to express our sincere condolences in connection with the tragedies striking Bangladesh, India, Japan, Nepal and the United States of America. I shall continue this statement in my national language.

(Mr. Ribas Reig, Andorra)

(spoke in Catalan; English text furnished by the delegation)

Today is a historic day for Andorra. My State has been admitted as a Member of the United Nations. We have come to New York to raise our flag among those of other States. In this way we fulfil many of the aspirations of our people and witness the culmination of a process of serene and tenacious transformation. Andorra is no longer a vestige of feudal and medieval law but a State established according to the principles of modern international law. We have thus closed a centuries-long process of judicial formulation that began more than 700 years ago with the documents called the Pariatges and that has finally led to this ceremony.

At this time and on this occasion, it is only fair that I should make special mention of our two Heads of State, Their Excellencies the Co-Princes, who have encouraged, cooperated on and shown their acceptance of the process of institutional modernization. I also wish to recall all my countrymen who, since 1925 when our country first approached the League of Nations, have struggled to make this ceremony a reality.

Furthermore, permit me to say that it is a great personal honour for me to represent the Andorran people here and that I consider myself extremely privileged to take part in this ceremony and carry out this very gratifying duty, because today, as it reaches this landmark, Andorra achieves the goals of normalization and integration into the international community to which many people of my generation and I myself have devoted the best years of our lives.

(Mr. Ribas Reig, Andorra)

I wish to express our sincere gratitude to the Security Council and to the Secretary-General for their support during the admission process. I wish in particular also to express our warmest and deepest gratitude to Their Excellencies the representatives of the French Republic and of the Kingdom of Spain, who are in fact sponsoring the admission of our State today. I request them to convey our sentiments to their respective Governments: the same sentiments that have traditionally marked the frank and loyal cooperation between us, which I am certain will continue and even grow stronger in the future. I am also convinced that, in a similar way, our integration will be consolidated in all that the European Community represents, because we are not only situated within the Community from the territorial standpoint, but also wish to be immersed in it from the standpoint of its philosophy and of the model of society that it proposes.

We are a small country, but one that is aware of the value of authenticity and of the fact that, in a world that is in certain ways inordinately large, small dimensions may offer a positive contribution to balanced coexistence. What should be the ideal size of a State? Neither economics nor political science can give us a definitive answer to this question, of course. Aristotle, in his Politics, says that the size of the polis should permit all the inhabitants to be familiar with each other's character; it should be possible, he adds, completely to survey the territory from a mountaintop. Andorra possesses these human and geographical features.

Along with other micro-States of the world, we fear political giantism all the more as we are bound more closely to the notions of measure and accessibility to political life, characteristics of our country that should be

(Mr. Ribas Reig, Andorra)

safeguarded. Indeed, we still believe that man is the measure of all things. I believe that, in a world that must struggle for peace, there is a place for those of us who have chosen to coexist harmoniously and not to impose ourselves. For that reason, in the context of its modest possibilities, Andorra has the firm intention of contributing to world peace and cooperation and of sharing its ancient and never forsaken love of freedom.

I would recall that my country has not been at war since the thirteenth century.

We are a State without natural riches. We have no strength or wealth other than that of our people themselves. We are a country of the Pyrenees, those European mountains that do not form a barrier but a meeting place. The stimulation of the economic development of the Pyrenees is a priority from the standpoints of well-being, prosperity and quality of life, and from those of justice, solidarity and the need to establish firmly and retain the traditional inhabitants in the mountains for reasons of common interest, such as the conservation of nature.

(Mr. Ribas Reig)

Andorra is not a depressed area, however. It has always shown itself to be capable of adapting to changing circumstances in order to achieve a high income level. With the democratic adoption of our Constitution and the opening of our participation in the international scene, as marked by this ceremony, Andorra looks to the future with optimism, trusting in its capacity and in its hopes to make the most of the new opportunities available to it.

Our country is actually a valley, and it may be said that a valley forms a way of life. It is a home; it provides water and a livelihood; in short, it is a community adapted to the measure of the individual and of the family. Just as the large valleys of the Ganges and of the Nile were the cradles of great civilizations, so our little valley of the Valira River has shaped a national identity over the centuries, an identity that has not been forged against anything or against anyone. On the contrary, we have always been a hospitable country, welcoming all those who have come to our valley. It is precisely from the standpoint of our identity that we wish to contribute our collective personality, because identity and universality are perfectly compatible, combining to form a solid base for the exchange of cultures - a necessary foundation for the construction of a free and peaceful world. This is why we, as a country wishing to open itself up to the outside world, first sought to ensure the cohesion of our identity. We were quite certain that to get things done and to communicate them, we needed to be cosmopolitan and multilingual. But to be so, we also need to root ourselves even deeper in our own reality, and our roots are those of Catalan culture. Catalan is our official language. It is the language of Ramon Llull, Ausias March and Salvador Espriu, and it is spoken from the city of Fraga in Aragon to Mahon on

(Mr. Ribas Reig)

the Balearic island of Minorca, and from Salses in the French region of Roussillon to Guardamar in the southern part of Valencia. Catalan is the language in which I have come to address the Assembly and to speak of peace, freedom and brotherhood.

Permit me to conclude by quoting the motto that appears on our national coat of arms: Virtus, Unita, Fortior - action or strength united is all the stronger - a concept that fits in perfectly with the objectives of the United Nations.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Head of Government of the Principality of Andorra for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Oscar Ribas Reig, Head of Government of the Principality of Andorra, was escorted from the rostrum.

The PRESIDENT: I should like to announce that the flag of the Principality of Andorra will be raised at a ceremony which will take place in front of the delegates' entrance immediately after the adjournment of this plenary meeting.

The meeting rose at 11.25 a.m.